

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4 line 6 with the following amended paragraph:

Another problem facing webcasters is that within the webcasting market, especially the video casting market, a large number of incompatible encoding and compression formats, hardware, and software have been developed (i.e., such as those developed by companies like Microsoft, RealNetworks, and VDO). This is significant because all webcasters employ some type of a compression and decompression (i.e., codec) scheme to deliver their streaming information over the communications networks at an acceptable data rate. Unfortunately, these various codec schemes are typically not compatible (for example, Microsoft's ~~NetShow~~ NETSHOW® computer program is incompatible with RealNetwork's ~~RealMedia~~ REALMEDIA computer software Audio/Video standards), and end users are forced to download multiple media players (e.g., codec software) that are specific to the streaming media compression schemes they are receiving to make use of the streaming media. Presently, there are no effective tools that allow a webcaster to process, mix, and time-synchronize media streams encoded under different codec schemes to produce a combined output media stream or streams. This incompatibility of standards limits the ability of webcasters to effectively utilize the large breadth of sources of streaming media (i.e., webcast content) available when the webcasters are developing their webcasting products.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 21 line 1 with the following amended paragraph:

The time-adjusted streams 234 are processed by the streaming media processor 240 to create a compressed composite stream or synched media signal 114, which is then transmitted over the Internet 144 to end-user nodes 170, 180. The media stream 114 is typically compressed and formatted to a conventional compression standard depending on the type of media file (e.g.,

~~NetShow~~ NETSHOW® computer program by Microsoft Corporation for video streaming media). The streaming media processor 240 provides many of the functions provided by a switching device in television broadcasting, including switching between two or more signals (here time-adjusted media streams 234) to provide a sequential composite media stream 114 with no data gaps or dead air. This combining of the two time-adjusted media streams 234 involves determining the end of the first of the two streams and beginning the second of the two streams. In other words, the last data packet of the first stream is identified and the first data packet of the second data stream is positioned adjacent this last data packet within the composite stream 114. The processor 240 preferably is also adapted for providing fading out of one stream and then gradually fading into another stream without gaps or jerks in the new composite stream.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 21 line 22 with the following amended paragraph:

Referring to FIG. 1, the time-synchronized media signals 114 are transmitted over the Internet 144. The composite streaming media may be received at a relatively simple end-user node 170 as a synched media signal 174. The end-user node 170 may be any electronic device capable of communicating with the Internet 144 or other communications networks and of processing the media stream for viewing and listening (or otherwise using the media stream). In this regard, the end-user node 170 typically includes a browser with a media player 172 selected for playing or processing the specific encoding standard utilized by the synchronization system 110 (e.g., ~~RealPlayer~~ REALPLAYER® computer software from RealNetworks, Inc. and the like).